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Sommario/riassunto	"This volume is both a formal study of the anecdote's properties and possibilities and an inquiry into the anecdote's intellectual function in Enlightenment culture. The author contends that anecdotes acted in Enlightenment writing as mediators between the incidents of human life and the laws of human nature, connecting the abstractions of philosophical reflection with lived experience. Successive chapters take a specific genre (the essay), a single writer (David Hume), a historical event (the Endeavour voyage), and a literary project (the Lyrical Ballads) as nets for collecting anecdotes. Each chapter is committed to the particularities of individual anecdotes and the specificities of the uses to which these anecdotes were put. However, the book also outlines a larger historical narrative in which the anecdote moves from a central place in the science of human nature to holding a particular place in poetry, even as the anecdote began to lose its currency in the emerging

human sciences"--
